FWIS 100: Fundamentals of Academic Communication **Fall 2016**

Racism, Colorblindness, and the Prison-Industrial Complex

Rice University

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:25-10:40am, or 10:50-12:05am (depending on which section you're in) in Herman Brown Hall (HBH Room 21)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:15—1:15, or by appointment

Course Description:
Designed to prepare students who need more time and practice in reading and writing to meet the more advanced communication demands of a FWIS (freshman writing intensive seminar), this course will provide an introduction to the expectations of academic readers as well as practice with the rhetorical and linguistic structures common to academic writing. Students will also review grammatical points relevant to the course material and assignments and learn to self-edit their own work. This course does not fulfill the Composition Requirement. Permission is required to register.

Course Topic: The term "prison-industrial complex" describes how mass incarceration in the US has become a source of profit for private enterprise. But how and why did this institution arise? Is it related to the War on Drugs? And what do race and class have to do with any of this? These are some of the central, interrelated questions we'll ask in this section of FWIS 100. Together and individually, we will explore these questions by turning to the recent work of Michelle Alexander—a cutting-edge lawyer and civil-rights advocate. We will also study several documentaries about modern-day imprisonment, gathering enough written and visual experience with the subject to contribute to the conversation together and independently. To that end, we will explore these hot-button issues by reading, writing, and speaking in a variety of genres, ultimately building our own skills as college-level writers, speakers, and thinkers. And as a class, we will work together and individually to move beyond our assumptions regarding these issues (what we think we know) into the realm of complex understanding (knowledge though research and sound argumentation).

Objectives
The goal of this course is to support students as they transition to university coursework by developing the reading, writing and presentation skills necessary for academic success. Students will learn that engaged academic writing does not simply report knowledge, but deepens and expands it by organizing facts into reflective meaning. It is important to remember that effective writing is a skill that anyone can acquire through guided practice and discipline.

By the end of the semester, FWIS 100 students should be able to,

1. Identify the purpose, context, and structure of an academic reading;
2. Compose well-structured academic essays whose content and style are appropriate for specific purposes and audiences;

3. Manage the writing process in order to deepen understanding while they produce and revise progressive versions of whole essays;
4. Produce a thesis statement that clearly informs the reader of the main focus of the essay;
5. Incorporate the work of others into arguments/essays and cite them accordingly;
6. Write and revise organized essays whose paragraphs make focused points, present supporting details, and include appropriate transitional devices;
7. Plan, develop, and practice oral presentations that analyze and address the audience and its needs effectively and appropriately.

Required Course Materials (Available in Bookstore, though I also recommend you order this through Amazon):

- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander

Course Learning Outcomes:

Read Effectively

- employ effective annotating strategies
- identify and understand a writer's position and major claims
- produce accurate summaries and paraphrases of readings
- synthesize and evaluate ideas from texts
- read for a variety of purposes, as appropriate for the writing situation, i.e. as a tool of inquiry, for information, and/or as a means to build and support an argument

Library Research

- Be able to navigate the research options available through a university library
- Recognize credible sources and genre distinctions in source texts

Write Well-Developed, Cohesive Academic Arguments

- advance arguments that employ an explicit thesis in the introduction
- develop supporting claims with evidence that is appropriate to an academic audience and argumentative purpose(s). This may include using a range of appeals (logos, ethos, and pathos), counter-arguments, and sources that represent an adequate range of ideas
- observe rules regarding intellectual property and plagiarism by documenting ideas from sources using any standard documentation style for in-text citations and publication information at the end of the essay
- integrate quotations smoothly both for meaning and grammar with appropriate signal phrases and commentary on the quotations
- produce multiple, focused supporting paragraphs
- produce an observable organization of ideas
- produce an identifiable conclusion
- practice flexible and recursive strategies such as invention, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading
- produce clearly worded, purposely varied, mature sentences
- use appropriate transitions between and within paragraphs

- sustain a tone appropriate to a college essay

Formatting: All written material for FWIS 100 should be formatted as follows:

- Times New Roman, 12 point
- Double-spaced
- Name, course, date in upper left-hand corner
- Title centered

Late Work: All written assignments carry a penalty of one half letter grade (+ or -) for each class day late. Missed presentations may not be made up unless in the case of a true emergency, in which case they must be made up in a timely manner, as agreed upon with me on the first day of the student's return to class.

Grading Scale:

98 or above = A+	81 to less than 84 = B-	68 to less than 70 = D+
93 to less than 98 = A	78 to less than 81 = C+	63 to less than 68 = D
90 to less than 93 = A-	74 to less than 78 = C	60 to less than 63 = D-
88 to less than 90 = B+	70 to less than 74 = C-	Less than 60 = F
84 to less than 88 = B		

Policies

Writing Consultations: FWIS 100 consists of three hours of classroom meeting time per week, plus one individual consultation meeting every two weeks. You may schedule an appointment through Rice's Center for Written, Oral and Visual Communication, on the CWOVC website (http://cwovc.rice.edu/home). *It is your responsibility to schedule a minimum of one writing consultation every two weeks. Please note that missing a consultation is the same as missing a class and will be counted toward your total number of absences*.

Grading / Add-Drop: Please note that FWIS and FWIS 100 courses are different than many other university courses in two important respects:

1. A FWIS course may *not* be taken for a Pass/Fail grade.
2. A FWIS course may *not* be dropped after the second week of class.

Attendance:

In a course of this nature, your attendance and active participation in classroom discussion and group work is essential. *You are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences, after which each additional unexcused absence will lower your Participation & Preparation grade by one half a letter grade.* Please note that three late arrivals in excess of ten minutes will count as one absence.

An absence will only be excused in two cases: 1) If you anticipate an absence due to a university-related activity or religious observance, you must notify me before the missed class day, and all assignments and evaluations must be completed before the missed class. 2) In the case of a true emergency the absence will be excused if the student makes a contact with me before the next class s/he will attend, and meets an agreed-upon deadline for making any missed

work. All lessons and assignments can be found on OWL-Space; *I am not responsible for keeping track of your missed work, regardless of the excuse for the absence*.

Classroom Guidelines:

- ✓ Bring a pen and paper to class.
- ✓ No cell phones OR electronics during class – keep them in your bag.
- ✓ You are welcome to eat and drink in class; please clean your area thoroughly before leaving the classroom.
- ✓ Late arrivals are very distracting; please arrive on time. In the case of an unavoidable tardy, please wait for a break in the discussion before taking your seat quietly and discreetly.

Communication: It is important that I be able to communicate with you throughout the semester. I ask that you review your Rice email at least once before every class. As this is class policy, it will be assumed that you have received any announcements or messages I send.

What to do if you miss class: If you are absent from class, it is your job to contact someone in the class to find out what happened. Do not email me asking for lecture notes. Find someone in the class with whom you can exchange your email address or phone number, and use each other as contacts in case you are absent.

Honor Code:
"On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment."
The Honor Code system and academic fraud are described and explained in the Honor System Handbook (http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/), and you are responsible for understanding the university's rules regarding academic integrity. You should familiarize yourself with the code. In this course, you are expected to do the actual writing of your assignments on your own, with no outside help from anyone else. However, you are strongly encouraged to collaborate on all other aspects of your coursework, including discussing assignments, reading each other's work, and making suggestions for editing and revision. We will discuss strategies for effective collaboration on writing and presentation projects in class.

Disability Support Services: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations must speak with the instructor during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

GRADING CRITERIA

An “A” paper offers an intriguing, well-developed thesis supported by well-chosen, appropriately cited textual evidence and shows consistent, logical organization. This paper contains a compelling introduction and conclusion, topic sentences for each paragraph that relate back to the thesis statement, and few or no technical errors. The “A” paper is successful not only at meeting all or almost all of the assignment’s requirements but also demonstrates stylistic precision, detailed analyses, and sophisticated reasoning.

A “B” paper offers an interesting thesis but occasionally falters in organization and suffers from some technical and stylistic errors. This paper may sometimes fail to support its claims sufficiently or to provide one or more basic structural components (e.g., introduction, conclusion). The “B” paper demonstrates originality, fairly strong writing, and a commitment to satisfying the assignment’s requirements.

A “C” paper that does not offer a new and insightful thesis and/or simply rehearses points made in class. This paper may also lack clear and consistent organization and may be technically sloppy (bad grammar and sentence structure). The “C” paper demonstrates a general lack of thought and effort.

A “D” paper presents an unoriginal or seriously flawed thesis. This paper suffers from poor organization and technical errors (bad grammar, poor word choice, weak topic sentences) and/or fails to provide adequate evidence for its claims. The “D” paper demonstrates an extremely weak attempt to satisfy the assignment’s requirements.

An “F” paper is one that is not turned in or that contains plagiarism of any kind. A paper that fails to present an argument and/or uses no textual evidence may also receive a failing grade. The “F” paper demonstrates a complete failure to meet any of the assignment’s basic requirements

Required Assignments (for Due Dates, see Class Schedule)

- Participation (includes Biweekly consultations with CWOVC FWIS writing consultants, in-class writing at start of each and every class, group discussion, homework, and 3 summary essays that are 2-3 pages each): 15%
- Essay 1: Informative Synthesis Essay (3-4 pages): 10%
- Essay 2: Argumentative Synthesis (4-5 pages): 15%
- Essay 3: Researched Argument (1-2 sources including the Alexander text): (5-6 pages): 20%
- Critical Annotated Bibiliography: 5%
- Portfolio: 30%
- Final Exam: 5%
- Total: 100%

In-class writing: At the beginning of each class we will write for five to ten minutes about the topic for class that day (you cannot make up this assignment if you are late to or absent from class). This will often involve free-writing based off of the homework and reading you will have done for that day's class. You may also have to write in response to a prompt or video I provide to the class. This may also be a time for pop quizzes in relation to the homework/reading assigned for that day. As part of the portfolio, you will turn in these writings to me at the end of the semester and they will, as a whole, receive a credit or no credit grade.

Portfolio Assignment: Your portfolio will contain significant revisions of your research paper and one of your other two essays. Your portfolio will also include a meta-essay that specifically addresses the changes you have made to these essays, why you made those changes, and how these changes have affected the final draft of the essay.

Final Exam: A five to eight minute oral presentation that summarizes Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*.

Essay 1: Informative Synthesis Essay

Essay 2: Argumentative Synthesis Essay

Essay 3: Researched Argument: **Purpose of assignment:** To develop your ability to introduce, integrate, evaluate, and discuss information from academic texts in order to make a successful academic argument; to practice the type of research and writing that is often a part of upper-division courses; to be able to distinguish peer-reviewed academic research from non-peer-reviewed and educated-audience sources.

This third essay will be an **argumentative analysis:** about 1500 words, double-spaced, standard fonts, bibliography/works cited page, at least one to two academic sources. Please note that your sources must be peer-reviewed, academic sources.

This essay is very similar to E2 in that it is an argumentative essay with sources. The primary difference between E2 and E3 is that you will almost exclusively use peer-reviewed, academic sources to support your position. Just as in E2, your sources help you develop **reasons** that support your **thesis** and **evidence** that supports your **reasons.** Consult Lunsford, the Purdue OWL, and UHD's own librarians.

Course Calendar:
(subject to revision)

Week 1

Aug 23 Introductions, Read the syllabus out loud, Get your text books. Brief class discussion

Homework: Type and turn in your diagnostic essay on OWL Space by class time on Tuesday.

Aug 25 Reading an academic text: What did we learn from flipping through the book? Content discussion: What are our assumptions about race and prisons? How do they relate to each other?

Homework: over the weekend read the Foreword and Introduction to *Jim Crow*.

Week 2

Aug 30 Discussion of Introduction. Discussion on how to write a summary essay (Part 1). How would we summarize Alexander's introduction?

Read half of Ch1 (pgs 20-40).

Sept 1 Discussion of first half of Ch1. Lecture on how to write a summary essay (Part 2). Start drafting first summary essay in class and polish over the weekend.

Homework: over the long weekend read second half of Ch.1 (pgs 40-58) and work on your summary essay.

Week 3

Sept 6 Discussion of Ch.1 as a whole. Discuss, brainstorm, and work on first summary essay.

Homework: Read first half of Ch.2 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 59—78).

Sept 8 Discussion of first half of Ch.2 of *Jim Crow*. Discuss how it was to write the first essay and strategies for improvement. Start brainstorming and outlining second summary essay.

Assignment Due: First Summary Essay Due Before Class Time.

Homework: Read second half of Ch. 2 of *Jim Crow* (78—96).

Week 4

Sept 13 Discuss all of Ch. 2 of *Jim Crow*. Work on second summary essay in class.

Homework: Read first half of Ch. 3 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 97—123).

Sept 15 Discuss first half of Ch. 3 of *Jim Crow*. Review MLA style. Work on second summary essay in class.

Homework: Read second half of Ch. 3 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 123—139). Work on second summary essay.

Week 5

Sept 20 Discussion of second half of Ch. 3 of Jim Crow.

Assignment Due: Second Summary Essay Due Before Class time.

Homework: Get started on research. Choose a general subject for your web research by spending several hours surfing websites that speak to your topic. Come to class with a list of five good websites that address your subject of interest.

Sept 22 Discussion of the sources you chose. Start summary essay of Ch 3 in class.

Homework: Over the weekend, read first half of Ch. 4 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 140—161). Finish drafting your third summary essay.

Week 6

Sept 27 Discussion of first half of Ch 4 of *Jim Crow*. Discussion: argumentative essay structure and, especially, the use of evidence (Part 1). What is an annotated bibliography?

Assignment Due: Third Summary Essay Due Before Class Time.

Homework: read second half of Ch 4 of *Jim CrowI* (pgs 161—177).

Sept 29 Discussion of second half of Ch 4 of *Jim Crow*. Lecture on using evidence in scholarly essays (Part 2).

Homework: Work on your annotated bibliography. Think about what you want to write about for the Informative Synthesis Essay.

Week 7

Oct 4 Meet with a research librarian to discuss how to conduct scholarly research.

Homework: Work on annotated bibliography and begin research for Informative Synthesis Essay.

Oct 6 Lecture on Writing to Inform, Synthesizing Sources, & MLA. In-class brainstorming.

Assignment Due: Critical Annotated Bibliography due at the beginning of class.

Homework: Research and writing. Over the weekend finish draft of Informative Synthesis Essay. Bring two copies of this draft to class on Monday.

Week 8

Oct 11 NO CLASS MIDTERM RECESS Peer Review Workshop

Homework: Compose final draft of essay with peer feedback in mind.

Oct 13 Lecture on Argument, Reasoning, Counter-argument, Evidence, and Explanation of Evidence. Lecture and discussion on how race and prisons are researched today.

Assignment Due: Informative Synthesis Essay due at the beginning of class.

Homework: Continue research using Dykes Library databases. Write down bibliographic information for sources that you are interested in reading. Assess sources. What will you argue in your argumentative synthesis essay? Read first half of Ch.5 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 178—200).

Week 9

Oct 18 Discuss first half of Ch.5 of *Jim Crow*

Homework: Read last half of Ch.5 of *Jim Crow* (pgs 200—220). Start brainstorming and writing your argumentative synthesis essay in class.

Oct 20 Discussion of last half of Ch.5 of *Jim Crow*. Discuss and work on argumentative synthesis essay in class.

Week 10

Oct 25 In-class research and writing.

Oct 27 Complete argument synthesis essay by class time and bring it to class to discuss in groups.

Homework: Revise argument synthesis and hand in final draft on Monday

Week 11

Nov 1 Lecture on how to expand the argument synthesis into a research paper. Introduce documentary film.

Assignment Due: Argument Synthesis Essay

Nov 3 Documentary film screening – in class.

Week 12

Nov 8 Discuss documentary film. How to incorporate documentary film into research papers.

Homework: Continue research.

Nov 10 Peer evaluation workshop. Discussion your portfolio and the meta essay.

Homework: work on your essay 3—it's due Monday!

Week 13

Nov 15 Revision workshop. Overview, catch-up, and Q and A.

Nov 17 Discussion of your portfolio.

Assignment Due: Essay 3 (researched argument).

Week 14

Nov 22 Conferences (no class)—come prepared with ideas on how to revise essay one or two.

Nov 24 Thanksgiving Holiday (NO CLASS)

Week 15

Nov 29 Working on our portfolios.

Dec 1This is the last official day of class. We will work on finalizing your portfolio and discuss the final exam. Portfolios are due electronically by midnight tonight.

Final Exam: TBA Required for all students.